A

PLAIN TRACT

ON

CONFIRMATION,

For Parochial Use.

BY C. T. QUINTARD,

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT,

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

"Now He which *confirmeth* us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 *Cor.* i., 21, 22.

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der that the baptized child may be properly instructed, and virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and a Christian life.* the Church has provided "a Catechism; that is to say, AN INSTRUCTION TO BE LEARNED BY EVERY PERSON BEFORE HE BE BROUGHT TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE BISHOP," and at the end of the office, or "Order of Confirmation," there is this rubrical direction: "There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed." And again immediately after the office for "The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years," there is the following rubric: "It is

of the mind, can alone secure to you the privileges of Baptism. Unless the vows of Baptism, of repentance, of faith, of holy obedience, be fulfilled, its privileges will be forfeited."—*Bishop Hobart's Sermon,* (1819).

* "You cannot be too thorough in your preparation of the young for Confirmation. There is preparation of the heart, and of the head. To both your earnest attention is to be directed. *Lead them to the* Holy Spirit *for the renewal of their hearts to holiness.* Seek to have them led by the Spirit, that they may not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; train them in devotion, self-examination, prayer, self-denial, taking up the cross and following Christ in humility, faith, reliance, and filial obedience in all things. Lead them to the Holy Scriptures for infallible truth, that their minds may be filled with its doctrines, facts, sacraments and duties. Lead them to Christ.—*Bishop Delancey: Charge,* (1849).

expedient that every person, thus baptized, should be confirmed by the Bishop so soon after his Baptism as conveniently may be; that *so* he may be admitted to the Holy Communion." From all this it is evident, that the Episcopal Church lays great stress upon the matter of Confirmation. Insisting upon it so strongly, she should have the most undoubted evidences in her favour. Some of the religious bodies around her look upon Confirmation as a novelty, as an unimportant matter, as something not to be required.*

* "Some Protestants have relinquished, while others have retained, the rite of Confirmation, or a semblance of it; as, e. g., the Lutherans, etc. The principal reformers of the German school, although they lost the Episcopacy, agreed in the opinion of the Apostolic origin and utility of Confirmation. Calvin and Beza both bore open testimony in its favour, in which they have been followed, in our day, by the 'General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States,' which may be seen in the 'Report' of their committee, quoted by Bishop Hobart in his sermon on Confirmation, and also by Bishop Mellvaine, in his little tract called the 'Word in Season to Candidates for Confirmation.' It is also well known that Confirmation is maintained at this day by nine-tenths of the Christian world, including the ancient European Churches, besides the Greek, Syrian, and other Oriental Churches, the English, Scottish, Swedish, and American Episcopal Churches."—*Rev. J. A. Merrick: Sermon.*

and the paschal lamb were types of Christ, so "John's baptism" was a type of the Baptism by the Holy Ghost. John the Baptist could not baptize into the name of Christ, because Christ, the spotless Lamb, had not been offered up a sacrifice for sin; nor could he baptize into the name of the HOLY GHOST, for the HOLY GHOST had not yet descended upon the Church. It was not until the day of Pentecost, when the HOLY GHOST descended upon the waiting Apostles, that Christian Baptism was administered. The full import of baptism could not be realized until the process which began with Christ's death and resurrection, had reached its consummation; until the exaltation had followed the resurrection and the glorified Redeemer had displayed His triumphant power in the outpouring of the HOLY GHOST. Now, St. Paul finds cer-

a new life. (*De Bapt.*, c. x. 11.) This opinion of Tertullian, of the positive impartation of a new life to the believer by Christian Baptism, which we call *regeneration*, and its superiority to John's baptism in its formula of authoritative words, its universality of application, its variety of subjects, embracing the infant as well as the adult, its general necessity and divine efficacy in our regeneration, formed the basis of the teaching of the most eminent doctors of the Church in all ages, and particularly of our own branch of the "one body."—*Rev. J. A. Merrick's Sermon.*

baptism by which they took the badge of owning the MESSIAS, but knew not His person. It was a work to prepare the hearts of the people for the reception of the MESSIAS "that should come after" John. The element of *preparation* was sufficiently indicated by John's baptism, and therefore Christ (in the prophetic words which have been preserved to us in Acts i. 5) contrasted that preparatory rite with the spiritual baptism which He Himself was soon to impart to His disciples. "The Forerunner" could not baptize with Christian Baptism. He was not himself a Christian, but a Jew,—the last of the Jewish prophets, linking together the two dispensations, the Law and the Gospel. His baptism was a type only, that is, a figure of something to come.* Just as Abraham's sacrifice

* "The Baptism of Christ doth exceed the baptism of St. John. I will name five distinctions:
1. In forma verborum. Acts, ii. 38.
2. In amplitudine nationum. Acts, x. 35.
3. In varietate personarum. Acts, ii. 39.
4. In gradibus efficaciæ. Acts, i. 5.
5. In modo necessitatis. Acts, ii. 47."—*Bishop Hacket: Sermon St. Matthew*, iii. 13.

Tertullian distinguishes the essential characteristic of the two baptisms in their spirit and nature. To that of John he ascribes the single character of repentance, and to Christian Baptism the impartation of

on what is really from God. He should, therefore, receive the Word of God "with all readiness of mind," and search the Scriptures with a holy nobleness, that he may know what that Word requires of him. And when he has discovered what it does require of him, that he is to embrace cordially and heartily; for the truth of the Gospel of Christ was not set forth for questioning, or disputing, or curious argument, or parade of knowledge, or to be heard and read without a purpose, as some read listlessly, or for mere pastime or pleasure, but for *obedience*. We must obey the Gospel, even though it be contrary to what we think it ought to be, and though it requires of us much sacrifice and self-denial—much that is unpleasant. A Christian has nothing to do with pleasantness when called on to decide upon a matter of duty and obedience, though the service of CHRIST will never be found a burden, but always pleasant and delightful to an earnest-minded Christian. His only object is to discover the truth, and pursue it through all hindrances, difficulties, and temporal objections. (2 Cor. i. 5).

The rite of Confirmation, or, "laying on of hands upon those who are baptized," in order

could go no further. But the Christian profession of these Samaritan converts was not complete; and so we read that "when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, *they sent* unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the *Holy Ghost*. (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them, *only* they were baptized in the name of the LORD JESUS.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the HOLY GHOST." (Acts, viii. 14, 17.)

Let us try now to understand this passage of Holy Scripture: "The Apostles which were at Jerusalem," They were there in obedience to the command of JESUS, which you will find recorded in St. Luke's Gospel, xxiv. 49: "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." They had been "endued with power from on high" on the day of Pentecost, when "there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST." (Acts, i. 1-4; ii. 3, 4.)

The temporary interdict which our Lord had

their souls strength to keep the promises by which they were bound to God, and to a giving up of the world, the flesh, and the devil. That something was necessary to complete or perfect their profession, we learn from the language, "only they were baptized," i. e., simply—merely baptized; so much had been done for them, and no more; and so, to complete the work, the Apostles "laid their hands upon them, and they received the HOLY GHOST."

Now turn to Acts, xix., and read the first six verses. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the HOLY GHOST since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any HOLY GHOST."

What is the plain meaning of this passage? St. Paul arrives at Ephesus, where he finds a number of disciples who had received from John the Baptist the "baptism of repentance." This was not Christian Baptism—i. e., baptism with water in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. It was a

TO THE

RT. REV. J. H. OTEY, D.D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF TENNESSEE.

This Tract

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY HIS SON IN THE MINISTRY,

C. T. Q.

laid upon His Apostles when He sent them forth, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city *of the Samaritans* enter ye not," was now set aside by the divine authority of the HOLY GHOST, and being "filled with the HOLY GHOST," they now for the first time leave Jerusalem, to do something for these Samaritan converts which Philip, a deacon, could not do, although he possessed the power of working miracles.

"They"—i. e., the Apostles—"*sent* unto them Peter and John." Peter and John did not go of their own accord, to do that which they might think profitable to these new converts, who had "by Baptism put on CHRIST," but they were *sent* by the whole body of the Apostles at Jerusalem, so that what they went down there to do must have had the full approbation of all the Apostles, and that, too, at a time when they were illuminated and "filled with the HOLY GHOST." When Peter and John were come down to Samaria,* they prayed for all that

* Says Bishop Beveridge: "It was an ancient and constant custom of the Primitive Church, as it is ours, for the bishop of every diocese to go into the lesser cities and villages belonging to him, and there lay his hands upon those who were baptized by priests or dea-

had "believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God," and that "were baptized"—prayed that they might receive the HOLY GHOST. For as yet, up to this time, "He was fallen upon none of *them*...ONLY they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." They had been converted and baptized, of course, through the agency of the HOLY GHOST; and the grace which the Apostles went down to confer upon them was not a *converting*, but a *strengthening, confirming* grace.* The "laying on of hands" was the perfection of the Baptism they had just received—its seal to the grace then imparted; it was a means of conveying to

cons, that they might receive the HOLY GHOST, as we learn from St. Hierom himself, whose words are: "Non abnuo hanc esse Ecclesiarum consuetudinem, ut ad eos, qui minoribus urbibus per Presbyteros et Diaconos Baptizati sunt, Episcopus ad Invocationem Sancti Spiritus manum impositurus excurrat."—*Sermon on St. Matthew*, xxviii. 20.

* "The Apostles adopted the imposition of hands to be the rite for communicating the SPIRIT in Confirmation, (Acts viii. 17,) which was so regularly observed that it gave the name to the whole office, which is called "Laying on of Hands," (Heb. vi. 2,) and not only St. Augustine, but most of the Latin writers call it usually, "*Imposition of Hands*; nor was Confirmation ever administered without laying on of hands."—*Dean Comber.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

On many religious subjects there is a wide and unfortunate difference of opinion among those who profess the faith of Christ. This ought not to prevent, but rather to invite, freedom of inquiry, provided it be made with candour, meekness, and charity. I repeat that this difference is *unfortunate*, because as God's truth is always one and indivisible, any such departure from this unity of truth, from whatever motive, is unfortunate. In every thing that relates to the revealed will of GOD, we should search with an humble spirit, we should ask in continual prayer, we should knock with continual perseverance, that so we may learn the mind of the LORD.

There are certain *facts* in which the Protestant Episcopal Church differs from all the denominations in Christendom. Now, every Christian must desire to know the truth: for Christianity and a love of the truth always go together. The Christian, especially, loves all truth connected with religion, and he is afraid that if he speaks from ignorance, he may throw scandal

DRAW, Holy Ghost, Thy seven-fold veil
Between us and the fires of youth;
Breathe, Holy Ghost, Thy fresh'ning gale,
Our fever'd brow in age to soothe.

And oft as sin and sorrow tire,
The hallow'd hour do Thou renew,
When, beckon'd up the awful choir,
By pastoral hands, toward Thee we drew;

When, trembling at the sacred rail,
We hid our eyes and held our breath—
Felt Thee how strong, our hearts how frail,
And long'd to own Thee to the death.

KEBLE.